

FAQs for State Board of Education Candidates

What is the State Board of Education?

A working board, it has been charged with developing policies for a number of areas, including school construction, high school graduation requirements and teacher preparation and certification. It works in concert with other government and education organizations to support student learning goals and achievement.

The State Board is one of the longest established institutions of Washington state government. It has operated continuously since 1877, when it was created by the Washington Territorial Legislature. It has been reconstituted by the Legislature five times: 1897, 1909, 1947, 1992, and 2005. In 1947, the Legislature established the lay board that will be re-constituted effective Jan. 1, 2006.

Its new purpose, defined in legislation (ESSB 5732) passed during the 2005 session, is to adopt statewide policies that promote achievement of goals of the Basic Education Act, implement a standards-based accountability system and provide leadership in the creation of an education system that respects the diverse cultures, abilities and learning styles of all students.

What changes are made by the reorganizing legislation?

In addition to reconstituting the membership, the legislation transferred all of the State Board's professional preparation and certification duties (for teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, principals, superintendents, program administrators, and speech language pathologists), and related program approval duties (approving programs in the colleges of education, both private and public) to the Professional Educator Standards Board, effective Jan. 1, 2006.

The legislation also abolished the Academic Achievement and Accountability (A+) Commission, effective July 1, 2006, and transferred its work on student accountability to the State Board.

Who serves on the State Board of Education?

Effective Jan. 1, 2006, the membership of 16 is composed as follows:

Seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate

Five members elected through the Washington State School Directors' Association, by the school directors themselves

- Three from western Washington
- Two from eastern Washington

One representative elected by the approved private schools

Two students selected in a manner determined by the State Board
Superintendent of Public Instruction

What qualification do candidates need to run?

Candidates for the five public school board member-elected positions must be residents of the region they wish to represent and cannot be employed by any public or private school, college, university or other educational institution, any educational service

district or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction after being elected to the State Board. Once elected to the State Board, a member must resign from any public school or private school board of directors.

Are there term limits?

Yes. Only the superintendent of public instruction can serve for more than two consecutive full four-year terms.

Who is the chair of the State Board?

The board elects its own chair.

Do all State Board members have full voting rights?

Yes, with the exception of the two student members.

What determines the length of the initial terms of board members?

The legislation that reconstitutes the State Board made these determinations. One member from eastern Washington and one from western Washington will be elected to two-year terms; one member from eastern Washington and one from western Washington will be elected to four-year terms; and one member from western Washington will be elected to a three-year term. The term of the private school representative is two years. Consult the election packet produced by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for details.

How often does the State Board meet?

The State Board will set its meeting schedule. In the past it has met six times a year: January, March, May (primarily for planning purposes), June, August and October. Those meetings lasted two to three days.

Where does the State Board conduct its meetings?

In the past, it has scheduled meetings on the eastern and western sides of the state to be accessible to members of the public. It often meets in schools and in Educational Service District offices. The board taking office in January 2006 will decide the locations, dates and lengths of its meetings.

What are the major responsibilities of the State Board of Education?

- High school graduation requirements
- School construction planning and funding
- Annual approval of K-12 districts for basic education funding (Basic Education Act compliance and waivers)
- School district boundaries
- Private school approval
- School accreditation
- Performance improvement goals. In this work transferred from the A+ Commission, the State Board is to adopt and revise performance goals in:
 - reading, writing, science and math, by subject and grade level
 - academic and technical skills in secondary career and technical education programs
 - student attendance

- Identify scores students must receive to meet standard on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

What are the major issues facing the State Board of Education?

The work of a legislative subcommittee created by ESSB 5732 to review the duties of the State Board will be reported by Dec. 15, 2005, and may contain recommendations to transfer or abolish duties it now performs. Those recommendations would need to take the form of a bill to make those changes in law. Such a bill could be introduced during the 2006 session.

Examples of ongoing work:

- Basic Education Act waivers (for example, when school districts request a waiver from the requirement that they offer a 180-day schedule to give staff more training time)
- Approval of private schools
- Approval of construction projects for school districts and skills centers
- Approval of schools seeking accreditation status

Organizing itself to initiate discussion and make decisions on accountability responsibilities will likely be an early order of business for the new State Board.

What is its budget?

For the 2005–07 biennium, the budget is \$856,000. This includes staff salaries and benefits, board members expenses, professional development, equipment and goods and services.

How is it staffed?

Five people now work in the office: the executive director, two managers (one for the research and assistance program and one for communications and legislative affairs), an executive assistant and a secretary/Web support. The State Board is assigned an assistant attorney general to advise it on legal matters.

Are board members compensated?

The State Board has a class three designation. This entitles members to \$50 per day for the conduct of board business. In addition, board members are entitled to a per diem rate (calculated by geographic area) to cover meal expenses. Pre-approved travel is reimbursable. Board members work closely with the secretary to book arrangements and track and report expenses.

If I have other questions, what should I do?

Feel free to call the State Board office at (360) 725-6025 or e-mail sbe@ospi.wednet.edu. Staff will answer your questions or make referrals to others able to provide information or insight.

If I have questions about the elections process, what should I do?

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction conducts the elections for the State Board. Contact the Office of Professional Practices at (360) 725-6130 or visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/ProfPractices/adminresources/SBElections.aspx>. 4.